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RICHARD RATHBUN

AMERICAN science has lost one of its distinguished authorities on invertebrate zoology, and the United States National Museum its honored chief by the death of Richard Rathbun in the city of Washington early on the morning of July 16, 1918.

Richard Rathbun was born in Buffalo, N. Y., on January 25, 1852, and there studied in the public schools until he reached the age of fifteen years, when he entered the service of a firm of contractors, with which he remained for four years, acquiring a thorough knowledge of business methods, that was of special value to him during his later years.

At that time, attracted by the specimens of fossils that abound in western New York, he began the study of paleontology to which he assiduously devoted his evenings and holidays. The collection in the Museum of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences was made by him and he was appointed curator of that subject with charge of its collections by the society.

In 1871, he met Charles Fred. Hartt, then professor of geology at Cornell University and a pupil of the elder Agassiz, who persuaded him to give up business pursuits and devote himself to science. Young Rathbun accordingly entered Cornell and followed the regular academic course with the class of '75, specializing, however, in geology and paleontology.

The collections of Devonian and Cretaceous fossils previously obtained by Hartt in Brazil were assigned to him to work up and resulted in the publication of his first paper: "On the Devonian Brachiopoda of Ereré, Province of Pará, Brazil," in the *Bulletin of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences* for 1874[1] followed by a "Preliminary Report on the Cretaceous Lamellibranchs collected in the Vicinity of Pernambuco, Brazil," in the *Proceedings of*

[1] Vol. 1, pp. 236–261.